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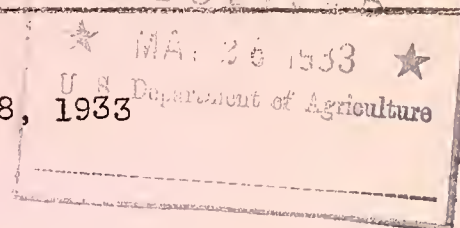
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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

THURSDAY, June 8, 1933

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)



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Subject: "More News About Making Over Hats." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Last week we had a chat about making the old straw hat young again. We talked about cleaning straw hats--how to remove soil with thick lukewarm suds and then a rinse in clear water. We talked about that trick of bringing back color to faded straws by covering the hat with a cloth wrung out of ammonia and water. We talked about bleaching a white straw with hydrogen peroxide. And finally we talked about reblocking the hat--how to steam it soft and then press it on a hat block using a warm iron over two pressing cloths.

But all these are just preparation steps after all. The real test of the home milliner is remodeling the hat into a smart and becoming shape. Take plenty of pains in shaping and in finishing, for the shape and the finish decide whether your hat will have a style and that professional look or whether it will have an awkward, homemade look. The successful hat, whether it's new or made over, agrees with the fashions and also suits the wearer.

If you've been watching hat styles this year, you've probably noticed that the new hats are of two entirely different shapes. In fact, styles vary enough to suit both Jack Sprat and his wife. The little close hats--the turbans or the fezzes or the so-called pill-boxes--are all high in the crown. Some even go up into a peak on top. Others are made to look extra high by a bow or a pompom or a tuck at the top. But the larger hats, those with brims are just the opposite in shape. They have low, flat crowns and are often called pancake shape. All hats this year--either the small, tall ones or the wide, flat ones-- are worn up high on the head.

This brings up one make-over problem. Suppose you have an old straw hat with a wide brim and a deep crown, a hat made in the days when we wore them well down over our heads. To make that hat fit present-day styles, you must flatten or lower that deep crown. How to do it? One good way is to make a deep crease running around the top and press it in. You can make an even crease all around the crown. Or, you can make a deep crease on one side and a narrow one on the other. This will tilt the hat and make it a bit jaunty and perhaps more becoming to you. Or, you can crease the crown across the back and give the hat that new high line in back. Try the hat on before a mirror. Crease it this way and that until the shape looks smart and becoming. Then hold the creases in place, set the hat on a block, steam it until soft and press it with a warm iron over two pressing cloths. A strip of cardboard placed inside the hat will hold the crease in place while you press. Another way to make the crown lower is to put tucks in at the right spot. Still another way is to crush the hat into uneven folds and fasten underneath by tacking onto a ribbon.





Now about the brim of the hat. If the brim is too wide to be becoming, you can trim it off. But trim carefully. Cut a little off the edge. Then try the hat on. Then trim a little more and try on. Go easy until you have exactly the width that suits you. A little too much trimming and,-- alas, the hat is done for. After trimming, you can bind the brim with some soft material like grosgrain ribbon so the straw won't ravel. The new shiny ribbon, called ciré satin, is also good for binding. Be careful in turning the edge of the hat. Straw cracks easily. But if the brim happens to be too narrow, you can sometimes widen it by sewing ribbon around the edge.

The successful home milliner, like the successful home dressmaker, keeps her eyes open when she goes shopping and gets ideas from store windows, or from hats she sees on other women or from fashion magazines. The photographs especially in fashion magazines are helpful. From them you can learn exactly what the new hats look like, how to finish them and how to wear them. Pictures tell the story better than any words I can give you. You can't model hats into becoming styles just by hard and fast rules. Every woman is different and must find her own style. So train your eye. Practice and try on and experiment before a mirror--a long mirror, if possible. If you haven't a long mirror, get an idea of your silhouette with the hat on by looking in a window pane. And by the way, try that new hat on with the outfit you plan to wear with it, not with your old house dress. It will give quite a different effect.

Now for a question or two. Someone asked the other day how to finish the hat inside. Hat linings are very simple this year. Most of the new hats have just a band of ribbon attached at the bottom of the crown to protect the hat from soil. Others have a strip of silk, cut on the bias, and fastened in the same way. If you have an old hat lining, you can wash it, press it and set it in. Be sure the lining is set back far enough so it won't show when you wear the hat. By the way, you can clean most ribbons by washing in soap and water. After rinsing wrap the ribbon around a glass tumbler to dry and it won't need ironing.

Here's another question about hats. "How can I clean a soiled white felt hat?" Answer. That depends on how badly soiled it is. Sometimes you can remove a few little spots with a soft rubber eraser or with a dry sponge or with a little piece of very fine sandpaper or pumice. A clean stiff brush also helps. Sometimes you can clean the hat successfully with an absorbent powder. Our Grandmothers used cornmeal for cleaning. Cornmeal is a good absorbent. So is powdered chalk or fuller's earth or magnesium carbonate. We call these substances absorbents because, when spread on soiled fabrics, they absorb dirt. Absorbents are successful if the stain is light or freshly made, but they are not effective when the stain is set or very large. Cover your soiled hat with cornmeal or fuller's earth or any other absorbent in a thick layer. Do it at night and rub the powder in well. Leave it on until morning. Then brush it off. The dirt will come off with the powder. Or, you can make a paste of calcined magnesium and cold water. Brush the paste well over the hat. When the paste is perfectly dry, brush it off with a clean stiff brush.

Tomorrow: "Sunday Dinner with Fresh Strawberry Pie."

